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But when we do act freely, or spontaneously, prediction is impossible.

Many people believe that our inability to predict in this field is due to a temporary ignorance of biological laws, which ignorance will disappear in the future. This belief is due to a fundamental misconception of the influence of time on our reactions. Prediction is most accurate in the sciences of logic, mathematics, astronomy, physics and inorganic chemistry, and is least accurate in biology, political economy, sociology and history. In the former, spontaneity, as I have defined it, does not exist; but in the latter sciences, dealing as they do with the living, spontaneity is bound to enter often and spoil our predictions.

The existing state of our biological knowledge has nothing to do with the case. Whenever there is spontaneity, we fail in our predictions, and must always fail, because then the time between a prediction and the phenomenon predicted can not be ignored without destroying the accuracy of the prediction.

A. A. MERRILL.

PASADENA.

REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

The Good Man and the Good: an Introduction to Ethics. MARY WHITON CALKINS. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1918. Pp. xx + 219.

Miss Calkins has given us here an excellent brief psychological introduction to ethics. The discussion is condensed, clear and acute in its discriminations. The first seventy-five pages deal with the meaning of the terms "the good" and "the good man;" the hundred pages following discuss the virtues—thrift, abstinence, courage, prudence, truthfulness, justice, generosity, obedience, non-conformity and pugnacity, with a very brief chapter contrasting the moral with the esthetic and the religious experience. Thirty-five pages of notes and bibliographical references, and a careful index, conclude the volume.

Pedagogically, this arrangement leaves little to be desired for those who are interested in the psychology of morality. It is perhaps a bit too schematic, and the discussions too abstract, to attract the "general reader"—who is fed in these days on every hand with excitements and exigencies, and drawn irresistibly into the arena of practical decision. Indeed, the drift of current opinion seems to be that college students, in ethics courses, ought to be considering concrete moral *problems*, rather than—or, at least, in addition to—the nature of instinct, will, and the "virtues." It is being widely doubted whether these psychological discussions—as well as the re-

moter metaphysical discussions which Miss Calkins herself avoids—throw much light upon these actual problems of conduct which confront us. Men of the most opposite metaphysical and psychological theories agree in their practical attitudes, while members of the same school as regards “theory” differ diametrically in application. The natural inference seems to be that what is needed for moral guidance is not so much a correct analysis of the sense of duty, or an understanding of the instinctive roots of the “virtues,” as a mass of information concerning the *possibilities* of action in a given situation, and the *results*, immediate and far-reaching, to be expected from these possible courses of action. Common sense and normal human good will can then be trusted, without raising fundamental questions, to make far wiser decisions than acute philosophical analysis which lacks a comprehensive knowledge of the bearings of the concrete situation.

When Miss Calkins does bend to a few words of practical application, what she has to say is extremely pertinent and wise. The remarks on the importance of truthfulness; on the danger that besets truly loving parents and spouses, of “nagging;” on the problem of distributive justice, are indicative of the great practical value that a development of the volume along these lines might have. Perhaps a future enlarged edition may include more pages like these.

The best piece of analysis in the volume, however, is the “double-self theory” of the sense of duty, or “experience of obligation.” “The consciousness of obligation is the experience of self-compulsion. And the explanation of the paradoxical combination in the moral experience of the seemingly inconsistent factors of submission and freedom lies precisely herein: in the fact that the law to which I submit is neither an inexorable nature-law, or uniformity, nor yet an external social law—the imposition of another’s will—but is, rather, the law, the imperative which I, as ruling self, impose on myself, as compelled self” (p. 13).

Morality, according to the view here presented, is subjective: “A man is good or bad, moral or immoral, according as he wills or refuses to will what is to him, and not to any one else, the good. There are therefore no objective criteria of a man’s goodness or badness” (p. 35). The doctrine is that of “the good man as he who wills that which he conceives as a self-sufficient aim” (p. 37). This turns out, indeed, to be only a verbal relativism, for, though “it follows that men with different views of the good are equally moral, it by no means follows that these men’s views of the good are equally adequate. Therefore the moralist, though he must judge a given man good or bad according to the man’s own standards, must, on

the other hand, attempt to estimate both the man's conception of "the good" and also the methods by which he tries to realize the good by comparison with other conceptions and other methods" (p. 38). It is not worth while to quarrel over terms; but to the present reviewer the exclusive or dominant use of the phrases "the good man" and "morality" in the subjective sense seems out of harmony with ordinary usage, and therefore needlessly misleading.

The discussion of hedonism in chapter V will seem to some the weakest point in the argument. Universalistic hedonism, the doctrine that the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the proper criterion of conduct, is condemned for its "narrowness." The only description of the good which is broad enough is that which describes the good "not in terms of any one kind of consciousness," but as "the fullest expression of every capacity, the freest exercise of every activity of the whole universe of selves" (pp. 78-79). There is a confusion latent here, is there not, between the concrete activities that we are to call good, and that which makes them good. Certainly, all sorts of concrete acts are good (if not "the fullest expression of every activity," which is surely saying too much, since some activities are clearly undesirable). But *why* are they good? Many of us will still believe that it is because they tend to bring happiness to (or to banish unhappiness from) some one somewhere; or because the breaking of the code that enjoins them has dangers for human happiness. At any rate, it is not clear that the "broadest" criterion must be the truest; and utilitarianism can hardly be disproved by calling it "narrow."

If one more objection may be permitted, where so much is above criticism, it must be to the assurance with which a particular view of the nature of religion is presented as unquestionably true. "The object of the religious man's experience is a self, or selves, greater than himself or than any other human self. This statement may be made with great confidence" (p. 171). Must the object of the religious man's experience be "a self, or selves"? That is, no doubt, the received opinion, and the outcome of Miss Calkins' own metaphysical outlook. But surely the views of those who hold otherwise—as, for illustration, Dr. Stanton Coit, in his illuminating discussion in *The Soul of America*—should not be so summarily rejected, least of all by a philosopher of the judicial and generous temper which we well know the but just now president of the Philosophical Association to possess.

DURANT DRAKE.